



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 3

Agenda Date: May 27, 2025

In Control: Economic and Workforce Development Committee Meeting

DEPARTMENT: Economic Development Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Brenda Hicks-Sorensen

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Economic Development Department Strategic Framework and FY 2025 Workplan Update.

SUMMARY:

Staff will provide an update on the progress of the Economic Development Department Strategic Framework FY 2025 workplan, which included four priority implementation areas: strategic account management; real estate & placemaking; small business support & ecosystem enhancements; and systems & processes. The briefing will also highlight specific programs within the implementation areas.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Economic Development Strategic Framework accepted by City Council on October 20, 2022, is a guiding document that defines the Economic Development Department's (EDD) role in the pathway to a more resilient economy, providing direction on competing with national, and global peers.

The Framework outlines four main goals to leverage existing strengths, mitigate challenges, and build on the momentum of existing initiatives, which are listed below. Recommended strategies for each goal are outlined in the Framework.

1. Innovation and Industry - Retain, expand, and attract businesses within each strategic industry cluster, provide more effective small business support, and facilitate innovation-centric entrepreneurship.
2. Placemaking and Real Estate - Accelerate place-based real estate development projects that create quality spaces for new jobs and investment in San Antonio's regional centers and neighborhood economic nodes.
3. Talent and Workforce - Ensure San Antonio residents have accessible pathways to well-paying jobs and employers have access to a robust pipeline of talent.
4. Capacity and Resources - Align the City's economic development tools around strategic growth and coordinate with local organizations on shared goals and actions that benefit San Antonio as a whole.

The Strategic Framework is accompanied by a departmental workplan. The departmental workplan focuses on each of the four goals and the tasks identified within each goal. Tasks are assigned date ranges for completion, with some tasks identified as ongoing due to the nature of the task.

ISSUE:

EDD identified several areas of emphasis to support the implementation of the Economic Development Strategic Framework in the FY 2025 Workplan. The Economic and Workforce Development Committee (EWDC) was updated on the implementation status on May 28, 2024, and City Council updated during the September 3, 2025, FY 2025 EDD Budget Presentation. FY 2025 key initiatives or highlights include:

- To continue support for the real estate & placemaking goal, EDD is in year two of the APRA-funded RevitalizeSA: Corridor Leadership Program. Fourteen current and future community leaders are engaged in this six-month program, which features both leadership and strategy sessions. The strategy sessions are built around Main Street America's Four-Point approach to community-driven, comprehensive revitalization – Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization. Following the six-month learning experience, cohort members can demonstrate their leadership via a project in their targeted corridor, with up to \$10,000 in CHANGE Grant funding.
- Additionally, the San Antonio Economic Development Corporation (SAEDC) Board of Directors continued to support the efforts by approving a new workplan in January 2025. The workplan targets two city-owned properties in priority corridors for potential redevelopment. Following the workplan approval in January, EDD staff have identified properties and are working through the initial due diligence phase.
- On October 1, 2025, at the relaunch of Launch SA in partnership with Geekdom, EDD introduced several new data analytics and research tools to support small businesses and entrepreneurs. Launch SA Link is a free tool to help small businesses and entrepreneurs easily navigate the small business ecosystem of resources all in one, convenient and easy-to-use platform. SizeUp is a free tool to help small businesses and entrepreneurs improve

services and operations with research and business intelligence tools such as insights on local competitors and marketing hot spots.

- The Small Business Economic Development Advocacy Program (SBEDA) Ordinance revisions were approved by City Council in December 2024 with EDD focused on full implementation by July 1, 2025. Significant outreach has already occurred, and EDD will continue to engage stakeholders throughout the process.
- Implementation of the SBEDA Ordinance revisions has allowed EDD to review and undertake process improvements associated with the implementation and administration of the program. Significant enhancements were identified and are being implemented. Similarly, process review and improvement assessment were undertaken for incentive projects and contract compliance, with enhancements identified to be implemented by December 2025.
- Included in the Framework were several goals highlighting a need for Strategic Account Management, including the expansion of the City's business retention and growth (BRG) efforts. In January 2024 the department launched its BRG program. One year later, EDD is assessing performance and will be implementing adjustments. Thus far in FY 2025, EDD staff has focused on small businesses impacted by construction, growth companies, target industries, and businesses with Federal contracts.

In March 2025, EDD published the updated Economic Performance dashboard, available on the EDD website. The updated dashboard now includes Small Business Economic Development Advocacy (SBEDA) data, a verified business tool, additional EDD performance data, additional San Antonio business data, and enhanced peer city comparison data. Both the Strategic Framework update and dashboard were presented to the Small Business Advisory Commission (SBAC) on May 13, 2025.

On February 25, 2025, EWDC was updated on the \$33.9 million American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Small Business Implementation Plan. EDD will continue to implement those programs, as well.

FISCAL IMPACT:

N/A

ALTERNATIVES:

N/A

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff does not recommend any action.